

ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR EMOTIONAL MATURITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at investigating the Altruistic behavior of adolescents in relation to their Emotional maturity. 200 adolescents (boys and girls) from rural and urban areas were selected by random sampling technique. The investigator has adopted a normative survey method, in the present study. Altruism scale, developed by Dr. S. N. Rai and Dr. Sanwat Singh (1981), and Emotional Maturity Scale by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava (1993) was used for data collection. For the analysis of data, the descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation, correlation and 't'-test was employed. In this study, an attempt has been made, to compare the Altruistic behavior and Emotional maturity of adolescents, with respect to gender and locale. No significant difference was found in Altruistic behavior of adolescents, with respect to gender and locale. Whereas, a significant difference was found in Emotional maturity of male and female adolescents. The essential conclusion of this study was that, a strong correlation exists between the altruism and emotional maturity of adolescents.

KEYWORDS: Altruistic Behavior, Emotional Maturity & Adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Today, is the era of globalization, with the rapid advancement in all walks of life. The modernization and industrialization have made life fast and problems have also multiplied in that proportion. The modernization has caused stress, anxiety and emotional disturbances, in the youth and depression and anxiety rates have risen dramatically (Easterbrook, 2003). However, such elevated rates of depression require serious reflection on our social environment, and the restoration of pro social altruistic behaviors and emotional maturity.

The present era has witnessed the importance of emotional maturity and altruistic behavior, more especially in the harmonious development of the adolescents. Emotional maturity is influenced by interests, aptitudes, self-concept, and academic achievement and motivation. Environmental factors like school environment, home environment, family climate and parental encouragement, also influence emotional maturity of the individual. A healthy organizational climate and supportive parent child relationships, can help in nurturing positive behavior like altruism and emotional maturity, among youth. So, the aim of present study is to examine the altruistic behavior of adolescents, in relation with their emotional maturity. Current research does indeed show a strong association between Altruistic behavior and Emotional maturity of adolescents. This paper points the need for future research in this direction, and suggests implications of such research for public awareness.

Altruism is the trait or practice of unselfish concern, for the devotion to the welfare of others. It is a type of social behavior, carried out to attain positive outcomes for another, rather than for the self (Rushton, 1980). Altruistic behavior can be driven by personal egotism, or it can be provoked by “pure” empathic desire, to help another person, regardless of personal gain (Batson, 1991; Batson, Ahmad, & Lishner, 2009). Positive psychology favors that traits like altruism embodies self-concepts, which has high empathy, high internal locus of control, less egocentric and socially responsible (Beirhoff, Klein and Kramp, 1991). Oliner (2002), states the criteria for altruistic behavior: it “(1) is focused toward helping another, (2) includes a high risk or sacrifice to the act for another, (3) is accompanied by no external reward, and (4) is voluntary or unpaid”. In contrast to Oliner however, Batson (1991) differentiates between altruism and two related terms: helping and self-sacrifice. Altruism “is the definitive goal of increasing the welfare of one or more persons, other than oneself” (Batson, 1991, p. 606). Batson says that, helping behavior is often regarded as altruistic, but we cannot presume it to be altruistic because, it is not always envisioned to enhance the welfare of others. Millon (2003) termed altruism as an act, which is individually directed for the benefit of others. So, altruism is the unselfish concern of an individual, for the welfare of others (Carlson, Martin & Buskist, 2004).

One of the important societal values, that parents try to teach their children early on, is altruism (Eisenberg, 1983). George palmer (2009) states that, Altruism is one of the most fundamental traits, required for all the domain of life. Paddock (2007) defined altruistic behavior as, enumerated from how we observe the world rather than how we act on it. Altruistic behavior can be regarded as intentional and voluntary action that benefit other persons, without obtaining any self-interest and self-benefit (Eisenberg, 1983). Hopkins & Powers (2009) inferred that, altruism is a motivation with an ultimate aim of enhancing the welfare of others. According to Robinson & Curry (2005), altruism is the manifestation of caring, selfless and non-dependent upon reward, and it is truly selflessness with no expectation in any kind of advantage.

According to Clavien & Chapuisat (2012), the term altruism covers variables, concepts and processes across various disciplines. There are four different, but related concepts of altruism. These are: (i) Psychological altruism, the sincere motivation to improve others’ interests and welfare (ii) Reproductive altruism, which involves increasing others chances of survival and reproduction at ones’ own expenses, (iii) Behavioral altruism, which involves bearing some charge in the interest of others; and (iv) Preference altruism, which is a preference for others’ interests.

Thus, Altruism is a behavioral quality, which benefits the giver as well as the receiver. It works as a strong pro-social behavior of individuals. So, there is a strong need to develop certain socio-emotional skills and practices, which can cultivate the virtues like altruism and emotional maturity. As altruism can bring qualitative and positive outcomes in life, therefore, inculcating altruism among youngsters should be a serious concern of the policy makers and the practitioners. Thus, this study can play a pivot role in the nourishment and development of harmonious personality of adolescents.

DEFINITION OF THE KEY WORDS

Altruism

Altruism is defined as the voluntary manner, intended to benefit another person without expecting external rewards (Millon, 2003). It is the willful sacrifice of one’s own interests or well-being, for the sake of others. According to Robinson & Curry (2005), altruism is the manifestation of caring, selflessness which is not contingent upon reward.

Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity is defined as, how well one is able to respond to situations, control ones’ emotions and behave

in an adult manner, when dealing with others. An emotionally mature person is able to demonstrate a well-balanced emotional behavior in his day to day life. Emotionally mature person, feels the proper emotion in a proper situation and expresses it in a proper quantity.

Adolescent

WHO (2013), defines adolescence as the period of human growth and development, that occurs after childhood and before adulthood. Adolescents aged between 10-19 years account, for more than one-fifth of the whole population of the world, although more recent research suggests that, adolescence can continue into the early 20years age group (Egbert, 2002).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem under study is formally entitled as

“ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR EMOTIONAL MATURITY”.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of studying positive psychological traits, altruism, emotional maturity and character strengths has gained increasing attention, over the past decades, since Seligman and Csikszentmihaly's publication in American Psychologists (2000). Seligman (2002, 2013) asserted that, one area in need of further investigation is how positive characteristics predict good outcomes and the absence of unwanted outcomes in youth. The proposed study will add to the available body of literature, that is available to answer such questions by exploring the relationship between altruism and emotional maturity among adolescents.

Research's findings by Seligman (2013), Emmons (2008), Fredrickson (2009), Lyubomirsky (2012), have discovered that, the strength of life is skill based and can be built methodically. The present study will examine these findings, by exploring the relationship between altruism and emotional maturity of a diverse sample of adolescents. As altruism is found to be significantly and positively correlated with emotional maturity of adolescents, therefore, it may bring serious implications for practitioners. Teachers and parents may implement the interventions of funding, to cultivate and increase the levels of altruistic behavior.

Lack of study on the positive aspects of life like altruism, helping, gratitude, emotional maturity, etc. keeps the society unaware of their positive impacts. In this context, the present study will throw some light on altruism, as one of the positive aspects of life and its importance in personality development. Further, the idea of positive psychology is relatively new in India. The researches on variables like altruism of positive psychology are very less. So, the present study is a humble attempt in this regard. So, keeping in view, the significance of altruism in every sphere of life, the present study is an attempt to explore the relationship between altruism and emotional maturity, among the adolescent students.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were-

To compare the level of altruistic behavior of male and female adolescent students.

To compare the level of altruism between rural and urban adolescent students.

To compare the level of emotional maturity between male and female adolescent students.

To compare the level of emotional maturity between rural and urban adolescent students.

To study the relationship between the level of altruism and emotional maturity of the adolescent students.

HYPOTHESES

There is no significant difference in the altruistic behavior of male and female adolescent students.

There is no significant difference in the level of altruism between rural and urban adolescent students.

There is no significant difference in the level of emotional maturity between male and female adolescent students.

There is no significant difference in the level of emotional maturity between rural and urban adolescent students.

There is no significant relationship between the level of altruism and emotional maturity of the adolescent students.

METHODOLOGY

Participants: The participants selected for the study comprised of 200 adolescent students of class nine and ten studying in Government High Schools in Ludhiana, Punjab. 100 of which were boys and 100 were girls. Equal representation was given to adolescents of rural and urban areas.

Design: The present study is an empirical study within the positive psychological paradigm. The researchers decided to use the descriptive survey method for the investigation.

The Tool Used: Following tools were used in the present study

Altruism scale developed by Dr. S. N. Rai and Dr. Sanwat Singh (1981), was used for the data collection. The scale consists of 30 items having three alternative responses i.e. altruistic, neutral and egoistic. A score of 2, 1 and 0 were given respectively to altruistic, neutral and egoistic response items of the scale. The minimum score is zero and the maximum is sixty. To get a total score obtained Scores of each item are summed. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.84 and the concurrent validity of the scale is 0.63.

Emotional Maturity Scale by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava (1993) was used in this study. This scale consists of 48 items, having five alternative responses, i.e. very much, much, undecided, probably and never. Respective scores 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 is awarded for each item on the scale. Total score on the scale is the sum of weight age of all items. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.75 and the concurrent validity of the scale is 0.67.

Statistical Technique: The researcher employed t-test to estimate the significance of difference between mean scores. To find out the relationship between variables, Pearson's coefficient of correlation was calculated.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Comparison of the Level of Altruism Between Male and Female Adolescents:

To compare the level of altruism between male and female adolescents, the researchers formulated the hypothesis as "there is no significant difference in the level of altruism between male and female adolescent students" and tested the hypothesis.

Table 1: Significance of Difference in the Level of Altruistic Behavior between Male and Female Adolescents

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	Inference
Male adolescents	100	57.8	11.95	1.13	Not significant at 0.01 level.
Female adolescents	100	55.06	11.22		

Table 1 shows that, the t value is 1.13, which is less than the table value (2.75) at the 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that, there is no significant difference in the level of altruism between male and female adolescent students.

Comparison of the Level of Altruism Between Rural and Urban Adolescent Student

To compare the level of altruism between rural and urban adolescents, the researcher formulated the hypothesis as “there is no significant difference in the level of altruism between rural and urban adolescent students” and tested the hypothesis.

Table 2: Significance of Difference in the Level of altruism between Rural and Urban Adolescent Students

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	Inference
Rural adolescents	100	55.06	12.95	1.82	Not significant at 0.01 level.
Urban adolescents	100	52.7	12.20		

Table 2 shows that, the t- value is 1.82 which is less than the table value (2.75), at the 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that, there is no significant difference in the level altruism between rural and urban adolescent students.

Comparison of the Level of Emotional Maturity between Male and Female Adolescent Students

To compare the level of Emotional maturity between male and female adolescents, the researchers formulated the hypothesis as “there is no significant difference in the level of Emotional maturity between male and female adolescent students” and tested the hypothesis.

Table 3: Significance of Difference in the Level of Emotional Maturity between Male and Female Adolescent Students

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-value	Inference
Male adolescents	100	57.8	11.22	4.55	Significant at 0.01 level.
Female adolescents	100	55.07	12.20		

Table 3 shows that, the t-value is 4.55 which are greater than the table value (2.75), at the 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that, there is a significant difference in the level of Emotional maturity among male and female adolescent students.

Comparison of the Level of Emotional Maturity between Rural and Urban Adolescent Student

To compare the level of altruism, between rural and urban adolescents the researcher formulated the hypothesis as “there is no significant difference in the level of altruism between rural and urban adolescent students” and tested the hypothesis.

Table 4: Significance of Difference in the Level of Emotional Maturity between Rural and Urban Adolescent Students

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	T-Value	Inference
Rural adolescents	100	45.57	7.49	0.66	Not significant at 0.01 level.
Urban adolescents	100	46.25	7.07		

Table 4 shows that, the t-value is 0.66 which is less than the table value (2.75), at the 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that, there is no significant difference in the level of Emotional maturity among rural and urban adolescent students.

Relationship between the Level of Altruism and Emotional Maturity of the Adolescent Students

To study the relationship between the level of altruism and emotional maturity of the adolescent students, the researcher formulated the hypothesis as, “There is no significant relationship between the level of altruism and emotional maturity of the adolescent students”, and tested the hypothesis.

Table 5: Coefficient of Correlation between the Level of Altruism and Emotional Maturity of the Adolescent Students

Variable	N	Coefficient of Correlation	Inference
Altruism	200	0.254	Significant at 0.01 levels
Emotional maturity	200		

Table 5 shows that, the value of correlation between the level of altruism and emotional maturity of the adolescent students is 0.254. The value is significant at the 0.01 level so, the null hypothesis that, “There is no significant relationship between the level of altruism and emotional maturity of the adolescent students” is rejected and it can be inferred that, Altruism is significantly and positively related to Emotional maturity of adolescents.

DISCUSSIONS

The present study revealed no significant difference in altruistic behavior of adolescents, with respect to gender and locale. A large number of studies have been documented on gender roles, in altruistic behavior (e.g., Spencer, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974), which revealed stereotypical results, that females are greater in altruistic behavior than males. Whereas, the results of the present study are in line with the researches done by Kreb (1970), Chou (1998), who have shown no significant role of gender in altruistic behavior of adolescents. The study has shown gender differences in emotional maturity of adolescents, but no significant difference was found in emotional maturity of adolescents, with respect to locale.

The results of the present study have revealed that, a strong correlation exists between the altruism and emotional maturity. Though, the investigator has failed to obtain literature on the direct relationship between emotional maturity and altruistic behavior, among adolescents. However, researches (e.g., Kapadia, 1966; Asbury, Dunn, Pike, & Plomin, 2003) have reported that variables such as family climate, gender and parenting styles in emotional support have an effect on altruistic behavior among adolescents.

MAJOR FINDINGS

There was no significant difference in the level of altruism between male and female adolescent students.

That there was no significant difference, in the level of altruism between rural and urban adolescent students.

There was a significant difference in the level of Emotional maturity among male and female adolescent students.

There was no significant difference in the level of Emotional maturity among rural and urban adolescent students.

There was significant and positive relationship between Altruistic behavior of adolescents and their Emotional maturity.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The essential conclusion of this study was that, a strong correlation exists between the altruism and emotional maturity, which provide insight to teachers, educators, college lecturers, and school teachers, parents to help their wards to channelize their emotional energy in useful and productive areas. The study has revealed significant differences in Emotional maturity of adolescents, with respect to gender therefore, there is a dire need for parents and educators take into account the factors causing low Emotional maturity among male adolescents. The study concludes that, gender does not play an important role in the development of altruistic behavior, among adolescents.

This study has implications for parents and school authorities, and administrators in general. Teachers and parents' attitude marked by acceptance, attention and supportive relationships is associated, with the positive personality development of adolescents. The parents can be guided to provide a congenial environment at home and understand their children, at intellectual as well as emotional level, so that, positive behavior can be developed among children. The present study will help the teachers in evaluating the Emotional maturity of the students, in the light of reinforcement in altruistic practices

The finding of the study will act as a linkage of Altruism and Emotional Maturity, which in turn imparts a significant role and greater achievement in personality development and prosperous bright future of adolescent students. As altruism can bring measurable positive outcomes to our lives, therefore, developing altruism should be a serious concern of the policy makers and the practitioners.

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